

## **Creating the Vision**

### **A Snapshot of This Year's Municipal Highlights**

#### **A HEALTHY LOCAL ECONOMY**

*City Council envisions Roanoke as a city enriched by regional cooperation, a diversified tax base, increased tourism, and job opportunities for residents and their children.*

- The Vidette Group, an information services company, opened new headquarters on Warehouse Row.
- Atlantic Credit and Finance announced a new location in Roanoke with 225 new jobs and a renovated facility – an \$8 million investment.
- Soft Solutions expanded in the city at the corner of Franklin and Mountain View and was named International Business Incubator Graduate of the Year.

#### **QUALITY GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

*City Council envisions Roanoke as a city whose government provides responsive, timely and cost-effective services to its citizens.*

- The Roanoke Police Department's highly acclaimed Homeland Defense Initiative has trained staff from more than 30 jurisdictions throughout Virginia. The program inspired the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services to develop a complementary statewide training program, in which Roanoke police officers serve as instructors.
- The Roanoke Police Department's Take Home Vehicle Program has increased the visibility and availability of uniformed police personnel within the city, while extending vehicle life and reducing operating costs.
- The Roanoke City Sheriff's Office was successfully re-accredited by both the National Commission on Correctional Health Care, and the American Correctional Association. These national accreditations are held by fewer than 10 percent of local jails throughout America.
- The Roanoke Fire-EMS Department won a \$624,840 Assistance to Firefighters Grant for safety and rescue equipment.
- Roanoke Public Libraries now offers 104 public computers at its six branches.
- Roanoke was recognized at a USDA Food and Nutrition Service Conference for its high level of program accuracy in determination of eligibility for Food Stamp program benefits for Roanoke citizens. Roanoke's accuracy rate of 95.52% ranked second highest out of the 61 representatives from Virginia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.
- In addition to local awards, the success of the Office of Communications' year-long "Every Drop Counts" water conservation campaign was recognized by the Virginia Municipal League and the U.S. Conference of Mayors (and the campaign continues today).

- In addition to local awards, Roanoke Citizen magazine was named one of the top three citizen publications in the nation by the City/County Communications and Marketing Association (3CMA), for the third year in a row.
- The Department of Technology's cutting-edge work to adopt and implement digital technologies to improve the delivery of services to citizens, combined with Roanoke's web site at [www.roanokegov.com](http://www.roanokegov.com), garnered Roanoke recognition for the second year in a row as America's Top Digital City. This distinction is given by the Government Technology Magazine and the Center for Digital Government.
- The Department of Management and Budget developed Roanoke's first multi-year financial plan that identifies estimated revenues, expenditures, and budgetary shortfalls three years into the future and suggests strategies for "closing the fiscal gap."
- The percentage of citizens reporting satisfaction with the overall level of city services increased from 87% in 2000 to 91% in 2002, according to the annual citizen survey conducted for the city by Virginia Tech. Similarly, the percentage of citizens agreeing that "the services provided by the city are worth the taxes paid" increased from 65.8% in 2000 to 70.3% in 2002.

## **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

*City Council envisions Roanoke as a city strengthened by good citizen communication, participation and pride, as well as enhanced regional leadership.*

- Roanoke successfully held its first Neighborhood Leadership College, to educate citizens about the functions of government and enhance relationships with community leaders.
- The Roanoke Youth Commission was formed, bringing together 22 young people to represent youth issues to City Council and city departments.
- The Roanoke Special Events Committee and Festival in the Park merged to create Event Zone, a new clearinghouse for Roanoke's special events.

## **STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS**

*City Council envisions Roanoke as a city comprised of safe, attractive, clean neighborhoods.*

- City Council reconstituted the Neighborhood Partnership Steering Committee as the Roanoke Neighborhood Advocates.
- The city successfully began the Southeast by Design pilot project by renovating a firehouse into a police substation. As a result, crime has been reduced by 50% and code violations have been reduced by 30%. Blue Ridge Housing Development has acquired 80% of the vacant land in the area to build 16 new single-family homes for homeownership opportunities.
- McCray Court was given the 2002 Virginia Housing Award as the best housing development project in the state.
- The city renovated a deteriorated house in the Southeast community, in which a Roanoke Police officer will reside.
- The city will engage the services of Virginia Tech to develop a Housing Strategic Plan.
- City Council adopted Neighborhood Design District Regulations to ensure that new infill residential development in certain neighborhoods of the city is compatible and consistent with the existing development patterns.
- During the course of the last year, eight neighborhood plans, covering some 15 neighborhoods, have been completed and adopted by City Council. Six additional plans, covering some 12 neighborhoods, are currently underway, with all neighborhood plans scheduled to be completed by the end of the calendar year 2004.

## **A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN**

*City Council envisions Roanoke as having a downtown that is clean, attractive and conducive to living, working and recreating.*

- Eight Jefferson Place, an 87-unit upscale apartment building in a former Norfolk Southern office building, is 60% leased and is a catalyst for downtown living.
- The creation of a connecting dance floor to the Elmwood Park stage will facilitate the Easter Seal's downtown concert series.
- Eight downtown restaurants now participate in the very successful Outdoor Dining Program.

## **ENHANCED ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

*City Council envisions Roanoke as a city that features clean greenways, gateways and redevelopment; by clean air, water and land; and by protected natural assets.*

- City Code has been amended to more proactively enforce nuisance ordinances to better protect the welfare, health and safety of citizens.
- Roanoke's Community Rating System class improved from Class 9 to Class 8, giving holders of flood insurance within the floodplain a 10% rate discount.
- The initial phase of the Tinker Creek Greenway, connecting Wise Avenue to Kenwood, was opened.
- The O. Winston Link Railside Linear Walk was completed.
- The Urban Forestry Task Force developed an Urban Forestry Plan for Roanoke that calls for a 25% increase in the tree canopy for the city, thereby improving air and water quality.
- Phase I of the Mill Mountain Greenway, connecting Elmwood Park to Piedmont Park, is nearly complete.
- The city's in-house school recycling program collects an average of five to six tons of paper each school year.
- Roanoke received \$40,000 in grant funding for the Roanoke Valley Citizens Corps Council (RVCCC) and Community Emergency Response Training (CERT), to organize and coordinate the involvement of the community in emergency management.
- Crystal Spring Filtration Plant was selected as a 2003 Project of the Year by the American Public Works Association and received a 2003 Construction Management Association of America (CMAA) Project Achievement Award.
- Bids were recently released for the first phase of construction work at the Roanoke Regional Water Pollution Control Plant. The upgrade will include replacement and/or rehabilitation of existing infrastructure to increase the long-term treatment capacity of the plant, from 42 million gallons per day to 55 million gallons per day.